(b) whether these rocks are hindrance to sea route from Goa;

(c) what steps Government propose to take to prevent recurrence of such incidents;

(d) what is the total quantum of oil spillage from the carrier;

(e) what facilities Goa Port has for salvaging oil from distree vessels;

(f) what is the damage to the marine life of coastal area in Goa;

(g) the number of families in fishing community affected due to oil spillage;

(h) whether Government will contemplate recovering of damages from the owners of the carriers; and

(i) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISITRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c) Since the area near Marmugoa experience a cyclonic storm of high intensity, exceeding 75 Nautical miles per hour, M. V. Sea Transport which was anchored at the port dragged her anchor and drifted out of port limits. The rocks where the vessel is stranded, are not considered any hindrance to sea route. This is a freak accident.

(d) to (i) The Port maintains one skimmer, 300 metres of bom, 2000 litres of dispersants and two units for spraying disperants. These units are carried on two tugs. The Coast Guard, who had undertaken the operation to pump-out oil from the ship have informed that there has been an extremely minor spillage and, therefore, it can be considered as "Sheen" and not spillage. No damage to marine life, as well as fishing community has been reported. The vessels is covered under third party liability and the Agent has already agreed to give a "etter of guarantee" for possible marine pollution claims, if any.

Increase of National Highways

307. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Highways constitute only 2 per cent of India's road length; but carries 40 per cent of the road traffic;

(b) if so, whether Government would consider to increase National Highways;

(c) whether Government consider to widen the highways and keep them in a good condition;

(d) whether it is also a fact that State Governmens are considering to hand over the highways to the Central Government which carry the national traffic; and

(e) if so, what is the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir. The National Highways broadly constitute 2 per cent of the total road network in the country carrying about 40 per cent of the road traffic.

(b) Owing to meagre allocation of funds earmarked under the Central Sector Roads programme in the 8th Five Year Plan, it is difficult to declare more roads as National Highways at this stage.

(c) Development and maintenance of National Highways including widening in a continuous process. Efforts are made to keep the National Highways in a traffic worthy condition within the available resources.

(d) and (e) Presumably, the Hon'ble Member is referring o demands of the State Governments for declaration of new National Highways. Due to meagre resources, it is not possible to declare any new National Highways at present.